

Article 3 – Citizens and the Council

3.01 Citizens' rights

Citizens have the following rights. Their rights to information and to participate are explained in more detail in the Access to Information Rules in Part 4 of this Constitution:

- (a) **Voting and petitions.** Citizens on the electoral roll for the area have the right to vote and to sign a petition to request a referendum for an elected Mayor form of Constitution.
- (b) **Information.** Citizens have the right to:
 - (i) attend meetings of the Council and its committees, including the Executive, except for items where confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed and the meeting is therefore held in private;
 - (ii) find out from the Forward Plan what key decisions will be taken by the Executive and when;
 - (iii) see reports and background papers, and any records of decisions made by the Council and the Executive (excluding confidential or 'exempt' information); and
 - (iv) inspect the Council's accounts and make their views known to the external auditor.
- (c) **Participation.** Citizens have the right to ask questions at all meetings of the Council, Executive and at Scrutiny Committees, with the exception of Annual Council and special meetings, subject to giving notice to the Council and speak at Planning Committee, on any application or Tree Preservation Order (TPO) being considered by that Committee, subject to the agreed procedure.

[Details on public speaking.](#)

- (d) **Complaints.** Citizens have the right to complain to:
 - (i) the Council itself under its complaints scheme;
 - (ii) the Ombudsman after using the Council's own complaints scheme;
 - (iii) the Monitoring Officer about a breach of the Councillor's Code of Conduct.

3.02 Citizens' responsibilities

Citizens must not be violent, abusive or threatening to councillors or officers and must not wilfully harm things owned by the Council, councillors or officers.

(Amended March 2020)